



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

APPROVED
Meeting Minutes
City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
December 9, 2019 – 4:00 P.M.
City Commission Chambers, City Hall
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

October 2019-September 2020

MEMBERS		PRESENT	ABSENT
Noah Szugajew, Chair	P	3	0
April Kirk, Vice Chair	P	3	1
Jonathan Bennett	A	2	0
Elizabeth Cupido	P	3	0
Christina Disbrow	A	1	2
Mary Kinirons	P	2	1
Richard Morris	P	3	0
Christi Rice	P	3	0
Terra Sickler	P	3	0
Marisol Simon	P	3	0
Dana Somerstein	P	2	1

Staff Present

Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager
Jamie Opperee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

None.

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- **Quorum Requirement – As of December 5, 2019, there are 11 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Szugajew called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. and all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

The Board and Staff members present introduced themselves at this time.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – NOVEMBER 14, 2019

Motion made by Ms. Kirk, seconded by Ms. Cupido, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

IV. CSB BUSINESS

Ms. Williams reported that the City received a letter signed “whistleblowers” regarding Care Resource, which is one of the agencies receiving Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) funds. The letter alleged improprieties within that agency’s Human Resources Department. The letter was forwarded to the City Attorney and the City’s internal auditor, as well as to Broward County’s Office of the Inspector General, as claims of this nature may not be addressed by the City.

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has opened an investigation into the letter’s allegations. Ms. Williams explained that this will affect how the Community Services Board (CSB) conducts business until the investigation is closed. She emphasized that this does not mean the allegations against Care Resource are true; however, it does mean a specific process must be followed.

Francisco Gomez, representing Care Resource, characterized the letter as slanderous, as it includes unfounded allegations against him and other individuals. Care Resource’s attorney has also opened an investigation with regard to the letter’s allegations. He concluded that the agency is open to investigation.

Chair Szugajew asked if the allegations address only the HOPWA program. Ms. Williams explained that they affect the County, the City, and Care Resource itself: if there is a finding, it could have implications for the City if the agency is provided with any additional funding. With this in mind, the City has declined the additional HOPWA dollars offered by the state at this time. The Board may discuss and consider how to move forward with or without additional case managers and an additional attorney at the next meeting.

Ms. Williams emphasized that the City has not permanently declined the additional funding, but has postponed its acceptance until they are up to staffing capacity. The state may decide to extend its offer into another funding cycle.

Chair Szugajew continued that the Board must still decide what to do with the funds it had planned to use in conjunction with the additional state dollars. These funds must be spent within the next five years. Ms. Williams recalled that the Board had discussed whether to use its funds for project-based or tenant-based housing programs. Should they decide to fund additional vouchers, there would continue to be a need for additional case managers and an attorney, as this would mean new clients are coming into the program.

Ms. Kirk proposed that a City Attorney address the Board and clarify what they should know and how they should further discuss the process. Ms. Williams advised that both the City Attorney’s Office and the City Auditor have opined that the investigation was beyond the City’s scope and should be addressed by the OIG. She stated that she would seek further guidance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

(HUD) on how to proceed, as the complaint was sent to them as well as the OIG. It is possible the investigation could take months to complete.

Ms. Williams continued that the Board will proceed based on the record of the agencies until otherwise advised. She concluded that she would reach out to the City Attorney's Office as well as HUD and forward their opinions to the Board members when they are received. Chair Szugajew requested that a member of the City Attorney's Office also be present at the next Board meeting.

V. HOPWA

• Agency Performance Outcomes – Broward House & MODCO

Stacy Hyde, representing Broward House, explained that the agency was unable to access numbers from the PROVIDE database, which meant they were calculated manually. She added that Broward House received a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant for just over \$100,000 to expand its use of the PROVIDE database, and will work with the City and County to determine the best use of these dollars so the system is more accessible.

Broward House offers three HOPWA programs. The facility-based program provides transitional housing, primarily through its assisted living facility. It serves individuals coming directly from homelessness, hospitals, or other situations that did not include housing. This program funded an average of 47 individuals per day, 99% of whom were connected to primary health care.

72% of clients in the facility-based program received on-site mental health and/or substance abuse services as well. Of the 105 clients discharged from this program, 82% transitioned to stable housing. This exceeds the contracted outcome of 75%. Most clients who did not meet their goals stayed at the facility for less than 60 days. Ms. Hyde advised that this time frame is vital in order for clients to establish structure.

Broward House's project-based housing program was challenged in the expenditure of all its revenues. This program has 72 units in 10 apartment buildings and one house. It operates on a cost reimbursement rather than a rental model, which is a significant fiscal change because it uses a different tracking system. Ms. Hyde advised that there may have been some errors in allocation that prevented the agency from using all these funds. \$86,000 was left in the program. Broward House is now working with a fiscal consultant to help strengthen its systems.

The project-based housing program served 72 unduplicated clients and took six new residents into independent living with wraparound services. They provide programs that assist clients in managing their homes. 100% of clients are receiving medical care, and 10 clients in the program have become employed. Broward House has also worked to

rehabilitate some of its buildings in the past fiscal year. They have remodeled 15 units and provided exterior renovations to three of its complexes.

Revenues for the tenant-based voucher program have been expended within 1% of completion. Eight clients were successfully moved from this program, including one client who purchased a home. Ms. Hyde shared some of the clients' stories from each of the three programs.

Ms. Kirk asked if Broward House has reached out to potential corporate partners to assist with facilities maintenance. Ms. Hyde confirmed that they are engaged with some of these partners and are beginning a capital projects campaign. Ms. Kirk suggested that partners may be able to facilitate awareness in the community.

Chair Szugajew asked if there was a way to put the unspent \$86,000 dollars toward other uses. Ms. Williams advised that HUD has changed the way project-based housing is billed: there is now a line item for depreciation, which bills for costs associated with the life of the building and its appliances. Agencies must use depreciation funds to make these improvements. HOPWA cannot provide additional dollars for renovation in addition to these funds; however, other funding sources throughout the County may be able to assist with renovations.

Sharon Bryant, representing Mount Olive Development Corporation (MODCO), advised that this agency's figures were also calculated manually due to a systems issue. MODCO provides both project-based rental assistance and a pilot program for shared housing called Master Lease.

MODCO has three HOPWA-funded locations under the project-based rental assistance program, one of which is a family facility for residents with children. During 2018-2019, the agency served 11 households consisting of 30 individuals at this facility. They also served 10 households through housing for single adults and couples without children. Their newest facility provided housing for five single males released from incarceration.

There are 21 total units under the project-based housing program, which served a total of 26 households during the 2018-2019 contract period. Of these tenants, 17 were employed either full- or part-time. Tenants attended and completed Broward House's peer counseling program, and those not employed were required to attend weekly life skills training classes. Two tenants passed away during the contract period.

All tenants have a housing action plan and meet regularly with a case manager to ensure they are meeting their outcomes. 100% of clients are adherent to their medical care. While MODCO did not expend all of its funds during this contract period, they worked with the City to ensure that they will be able to draw down all available funds.

The Master Lease pilot program provides shared housing in a four-bedroom, two-bath home for six males for a period of up to six months. The program's goals and objectives

included working with tenants to assist them in obtaining educational and employment opportunities. During the 2018-2019 contract period, this program housed five individuals, two of whom were adherent with the program and were employed. One of these individuals has since transitioned to his own housing, while the other coordinates MODCO's Senior Connection program in Pompano Beach.

There have been difficulties with some of the other individuals who participated in the Master Lease program, which resulted in their removal from the house. MODCO has implemented a more stringent screening process in order to identify individuals who can be assisted through this program.

- **Assessment Tool**

Ms. Williams advised that this Item was in relation to the prospective state funding and would not be discussed at this time.

VI. GOOD OF THE ORDER

None.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Gomez of Care Resource addressed the issue of the "whistleblower" letter once more, explaining that approximately two months ago, that agency's staff received a similar letter including allegations against their CEO. They also received a similar letter the previous week. He emphasized that he is proud to work with the CSB and to represent Care Resource.

VIII. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

Chair Szugajew requested an update on the OIG investigation at the next Board meeting, and requested again that a member of the City Attorney's Office be present at that meeting to provide the Board with guidance.

Ms. Simon expressed concern that the allegations against Care Resource could affect funding decisions the Board has made. Ms. Williams replied that this type of analysis has not yet been conducted. Ms. Simon requested that Staff look into this possibility and make recommendations to the Board about funding if necessary.

Ms. Williams advised that members who wish to attend meetings via telephone communicate this need as soon as possible so the City's Information Technology (IT) Department has 48 to 72 hours to accommodate them.

Ms. Williams briefly addressed the Board's activity cycle with regard to funding programs, noting that the January 13, 2020 meeting will be immediately followed by a planning meeting for agencies that wish to apply for funds.

It was requested that modern examples of transition from project-based housing programs under the HOPWA Modernization Act be provided to the Board members. Ms. Williams explained that this information is taking some time to compile and will be provided once complete.

Chair Szugajew also requested an update on the Board's request for a joint meeting with the City Commission. Ms. Williams stated that she will meet with the City Manager's Office to discuss this possibility and will update the Board on this issue.

Ms. Kirk advised that she was concerned with the lack of staff support in the Department of Housing and Community Development. Ms. Williams replied that this is primarily related to turnover, and there is no specific action the City Commission could take to address this need.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]